

## Massachusetts Forest Stewardship Program

### Policy on Eligible Stewardship Acres

March, 2005

**Joint Stewardship/Chapter 61/61A plans:** For any joint Stewardship/Chapter 61/61A plan all acreage classified under Chapter 61 must meet the requirements of MGL Chapter 61. Those acres classified as Stewardship acres must meet the guidelines set forth below in section I: Areas Eligible as Stewardship Acres.

**Stewardship Only Plans:** For Stewardship only plans all acreage classified as Stewardship acres must meet the guidelines set forth in section I.

#### I. Areas Eligible as Stewardship Acres

**A. Forest:** Areas with existing tree cover or capable of growing trees as defined in MGL Chapter 61.

**B. Abandoned Fields:** Fields are considered abandoned if they are not being used for agriculture, i.e. to harvest hay or support livestock. If the field is not intended to succeed to forest then the primary goal should be to provide early successional wildlife habitat. In order for an abandoned field to qualify as Stewardship acres, the stand description must contain the following information: years since abandonment, acres, types of vegetation, relative abundance and distribution of vegetation, value of area for desired wildlife species and desired future condition for the stand. The management practice narrative for the stand must contain the following information: explicitly state how desired future condition will be achieved and how the method, frequency and timing of maintenance will minimize adverse impacts on wildlife.

**C. Wetlands:** This includes all forested, scrub-shrub, emergent and beaver created wetlands. Stand descriptions must contain all the relevant information as required in the "Directions for the preparation of the Chapter 61 Forest Management Plans and Forest Stewardship Plans," except the timber inventory data can be omitted if the stand is not a forested wetland. Particular attention should be paid to the wildlife and watershed protection values of each wetland and how those values will be protected by management.

**D. Open Water Bodies:** The plan must specifically address the values of the water feature and how to protect or enhance those values.

**E. Power Lines:** Power line rights of ways are eligible. Stand descriptions must contain all the relevant information as required in the "Directions for the preparation of the Chapter 61 Forest Management Plans and Forest Stewardship Plans," except the timber inventory data can be omitted. Particular attention should be paid to the wildlife values of the right of way.

## **II. Areas Not Eligible as Stewardship Acres**

- A. **Houses and Outbuildings:** Exclude the area around the house or outbuildings that is mowed lawn or landscaped.
- B. **Pasture**
- C. **Hay fields**
- D. **Tilled fields** (row crops)
- E. **Commercial orchards**
- F. **Commercial blueberry fields**
- G. **Commercial Christmas tree plantations**

## **III. Special Considerations**

- A. As in Chapter 61, the minimum number of contiguous acres needed to qualify for the Stewardship Program cost share is 10. However, in contrast to the Chapter 61, for Stewardship, only **7 of the 10 contiguous acres** must have existing tree cover. The other 3 may be abandoned field or one of the other qualified types of land cover.
- B. Only areas qualifying as Stewardship acres as set forth above are eligible for Stewardship Plan and Practice **cost-share**, with one exception.
  - Agricultural areas directly adjacent to areas qualifying as Stewardship Acres are eligible to receive cost-share for **FLEP practice 609, nest boxes**.